

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AFSP, US, UR

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF US ADMIN/TECHNICAL STAFF

REF: MOSCOW 1408 AND 1594

1. DEPARTMENT WAS UNAWARE OF BAGGAGE INSPECTION FOR SOVEMB A-2 VISA HOLDER- UNTIL 1/8/76 WHEN SOVEMBASSY COMPLAINED TO DEPARTMENT THAT SUCH BAGGAGE WAS BEING SEARCHED AT DULLES. DEPARTMENT THEN WROTE TO US CUSTOMS AND BAGGAGE OF SUBSEQUENT SOVIET ADMIN/TECHNICAL PERSONNEL HAS NOT BEEN SEARCHED. ACCORDING TO SOVEMBASSY CONSOFF, CABLE TO MFA REPORTING RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM WAS SENT IN LATE JANUARY.

2. DISCUSSIONS WITH CUSTOMS INDICATE THAT A FORMAL REQUEST FOR COURTESIES FROM DEPARTMENT FOR EACH ARRIVING SOVIET EMBASSY STAFF MEMBER HOLDING A-2 VISA MAY BE NECESSARY TO INSURE THAT BAGGAGE WILL NOT BE INSPECTED IN FUTURE. EVEN THOUGH INSPECTORS HAVE RELEASED BAGGAGE WITHOUT SEARCH RECENTLY, INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMS INSPECTORS MAY FAIL TO MAKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXCEPTION FOR SOVIETS IN FUTURE UNLESS CASES ARE POINTED

OUT TO THEM, (UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE OF NON-SOVIET A-2 VISA HOLDERS IS NORMALLY SEARCHED). SOVEMBASSY WILL HAVE TO NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF ARRIVING ADMIN/TECHNICAL PERSONNEL SO THAT REQUEST FOR COURTESIES CAN BE SENT. SOVEMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THESE CONDITIONS.

3. DEPARTMENT SUGGESTS THAT EMBASSY ONCE AGAIN APPROACH MFA ABOUT PROBLEM, URGING THAT MATTER BE RESOLVED INFORMALLY WITHOUT AWAITING CONSULAR REVIEW. IF MFA AGAIN REFERS TO INSPECTION OF SOVIET NON-DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL IN WASHINGTON, EMBASSY CAN INFORM MFA OF ABOVE AND PERHAPS VOLUNTEER TO NOTIFY MFA OF MARINE ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES IN ADVANCE. EMBASSY CAN ALSO POINT OUT THAT US CUSTOMS DOES NOT ROUTINELY SEARCH ANY OUTGOING BAGGAGE.

4. IF EFFORTS FAIL, EMBASSY MAY SEND MARINES' UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE. PLEASE REPORT WHETHER SOVIET CUSTOMS IN FACT OPENS AND SEARCHES BAGGAGE SO THAT DEPARTMENT CAN CONSIDER APPROPRIATE RECIPROCAL ACTION HERE. INGERSOLL

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